INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Indian scene is marked by an amorphous, vague and confusing conflict between pre independence norms and post independence realities. While the former imply freedom, progress and the revolution of rising expectations, the latter unity, organization, distribution and revolution of growing frustrations. Growth of regionalism, ‘Sons of soil’ movements, religious fanaticism and communal politics point to the need for a discussion on the norms to be adopted for the formation of new states. The current debate on the formation of Telengana state has made the issue live at the national level. Political scientists have realized that many of their questions concerning contemporary situation are better answered if they are enlightened on their historical backgrounds. Policy makers too derive benefits from such an endeavour for it gives them a feel of the constraints and options which were open at an earlier period and their subsequent mutations.

The present study, ‘Formation of Kerala - Problems and Perspectives’ is an attempt to reconstruct the history of the genesis and growth of the Aikya Kerala (United Kerala) Movement that emerged as part of the movement for the linguistic reorganization of states in India. The agitation for the formation of states on linguistic basis was one of the most fascinating popular movements launched along with the national liberation struggle.

The redrawing of the frontiers of states to correspond to the linguistic divisions of the population was an event of crucial importance in the history of independent India. Its antecedents need to be examined in a detailed manner. The idea of forming provinces on linguistic lines captured the imagination of the thinking elite of the country in the first half of the last century. The spread of nationalism contributed in a very large measure to the growth of the desire for unifying people on linguistic basis. There are differences in ways of defining ‘nationalism’, some equating it with ‘national
sentiment’, others with nationalist ideology and language, others again with nationalist movements. Three classic statements are those of Renan, Stalin and Weber. Earnest Renan rejects the statist concept of the nation inorder to identify the nation as a form of morality.¹ Joseph Stalin defines that ‘a nation is a historically evolved, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make up manifested in a common culture.’² Max Weber examines the nation as a ‘prestige community’, endowed with a sense of cultural mission. He affiliates nations to ethnic communities as populations unified by a myth of common descent.³ Benedict Anderson regards nation as an artifact, "an imagined political community".⁴ Gellner defines nationalism as ‘primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent.⁵ This political definition is accepted by some others including E.J. Hobsbawm.⁶

Indian nationalism can be understood properly so long as it is duly linked to subnationalism. Subnationalism is theoretically identical to nationalism. But the difference is that the dimension of the desire for political control of a territorial homeland necessarily manifests itself in the desire for sovereign statehood in the case of nationalism, but it could imply the pursuit of greater autonomy within the existing politico-legal frame work in the case of subnationalism. Subnationalism is “we feeling” below the level of the nation state.⁷ Nationalism as applied to European countries cannot be applicable to India. Since India is a multilingual country, Indian society has

³ Max Weber, A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group, is a .........., Ethnic and Racial Studies 1/4, 1978 quoted in John Hutchinson op.cit pp 21-25.
always been pluralistic in character. Therefore the Indian national movement has had to embody in itself several subnational movements.

That regional identities sought to crystalise into subnationalisms becomes apparent from the early period of nationalist articulation in the late nineteenth century. The partition of Bengal in 1905 not only met with stiff resistance in Bengal but all over the country and sharpened the articulation of regional identities. The clamour that went up in Bengal against the partition not only reinforced the linguistic nationality ideology in Bengal but also catalysed the process in the rest of India. The Andhra Movement in the Telugu speaking areas of the Madras presidency was the first notable linguistic movement that arose after the Bengal agitation. The Aikya Kerala (United Kerala) Movement which manifested the urge for a subnational political identity of the Malayalam speaking people, emerged on the basis of a distinct culture and language.

The uniqueness of the Kerala region was noticed and recognized by the foreign notices and indigenous accounts from very early period. The ecological features like landscape, soil structure, rainfall and seasons favoured the development of a paddy dominated plough agricultural village system in Kerala.\(^8\) By the ninth century Kerala gets defined as a geographical unit with definite boundaries.\(^9\) The emergence of Brahmanical settlements in the river valleys of Kerala was a decisive factor in the formulation of the state and its distinct character. The introduction of the Brahmanical element with the Parasurama tradition is demonstrative of the distinctiveness of Kerala and its departure from the rest of Tamilakam. Parasurama legend portrays Kerala as a “gift from the sea” created long ago (when) the lord Parasurama flung his battle axe far out into the heaving sea, the waters receded and the land of


Kerala emerged into the sun and air”. Many others have discussed the legend in divergent perspectives.\(^\text{10}\)

Malayalam language became the strongest unifying bond for the cultural identity of the Malayalees. Distinguished from other regions, Kerala developed peculiar social institutions like joint family system and matrilineal system of inheritance (Marumakkathayam).\(^\text{11}\) Kerala has also developed distinctive art forms and architectural styles. The Malayalam speaking population of the west coast were bound by geography, tradition, language and culture.

The Renaissance movement\(^\text{12}\) started during the late nineteenth century laid out the background for the birth of modern Kerala. The reformist movements necessitated an internal reorganisation of the castes, which had been divided as various sub castes, into coherent mass communities. The


\(^\text{11}\) Literally means ‘descent through sisters’ children’.

\(^\text{12}\) The term ‘Indian Renaissance’ is conventionally applied to signify the intellectual awakening and the urge for socio religious reform engendered by the western contact in the modern period. However Barun De treats the term as a misnomer in the sense that the socio cultural regeneration in the nineteenth century India was only occasioned by the colonial presence, but not created by it. (Barun De (ed.), Perspectives in Social Science - Historical Dimensions, Calcutta, OUP, 1977). Later, Partha Chatterjee and others prefer to define it as an attempt at modernization in the colonial context which is branded as ‘colonial modernity’. Their contention is that the penetration of alien cultural values and knowledge systems was a virtual threat to the indigenous culture of India, (Partha Chatterjee, Nation and its Fragments (colonial and Post colonial Histories) OUP, 1994).
reform movements enabled the people to gain self confidence and self respect. The literary renaissance brought about a structural change in the realm of Malayalam language and literature leading to the consciousness of a civil society in Kerala. The growth of vernacular literature and the spread of newspapers provided the masses with the emotionalized link between language and nationalism.\textsuperscript{13} Kerala society began to be transformed into a modern civilized society with a distinct cultural and linguistic identity. It was on the foundation of this distinct cultural and linguistic identity that the movement for United Kerala gathered momentum along with the national movement of the country.

**Objectives of the Study**

The present study seeks to comprehend and interpret the various problems and perspectives pertaining to the formation of the linguistic state of Kerala. It is an attempt at putting together a good deal of relevant data on the issue culminating in a discussion of the perspectives upheld by different political organizations and social groups.

The study attempts to explore the feasibility and desirability of making linguistic criterion one of many bases or the sole basis of states reorganization. It enquires into the linkage between the national movement and the linguistic movements. The study endeavours to give an insight into the ideological positions taken by different political parties at various phases of the linguistic movement. The study also attempts to examine the efficacy of the linguistic states to ensure political and economic justice to the groups bound by the linguistic thread. The study invariably attempts to trace the identity of Keralam as a linguistic-cultural region.

**Significance of the study**

The present study is an exploration into the undercurrents of the linguistic movements, in the background of the national liberation struggle,\textsuperscript{13} J. Fishman (ed.,) *Language Problems of Developing Countries*, New York, 1972, p.166.
with special focus on the United Kerala Movement. No serious attempts have been made to prepare a comprehensive account of the various streams of the movements for the reorganization of states. Hence an objective analysis of some aspects of this movement is a desideratum.

Quite conspicuous by its absence has been a comprehensive study of the linguistic Aikya Kerala Movement in all its diverse phases. An academic analysis of the various strands of the movement with its regional ramifications in a chronological perspective seems desirable.

Sources of Study

Some of the related aspects of the linguistic states movement have already been looked into by well known authors examining the issue at national and regional levels. V.P. Menon in his ‘The Story of Integration of Indian States’ has presented an administrative point of view on the reorganization of Indian states. ‘Thoughts on Linguistics States’ by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar endorses Maharashtra’s claim as a linguistic state. K.V. Narayana Rao has written a notable work entitled ‘The Emergence of Andhra Pradesh’ but it is confined to the Andhra Movement. E.M.S. Namboodiripad in his ‘Kerala, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow’ approaches the problem in a different political angle.

The biographical narratives of the personages directly or indirectly associated with the Aikya Kerala Movement are capable of illuminating certain aspects of the topic in question. To cite a few, K.P. Kesava Menon (Kazhinha Kalam), P. Narayanan Nair (Ara Noottantiloode), A.K. Gopalan (Ente Jeevitha Katha), K. Madhavan (Payaswiniyude Theerathu), K.M. Panikkar (Aatmakatha), Puthuppally Raghavan (Viplava Smaranakal), K.C. George (Ente Jeevitha Yatra) Joseph Mundassery (Kozhina Ilakal), N.C. Sekhar (Agniveedhikal) K.A. Damodara Menon (Thirinhu Nokkumpol) and Kumbalathu Sanku Pillai (Ente Kazhinhayaka Smaranakal). These works portray their individual experiences and organizational ventures blended with subjective personal observations. Biographies on K. Kelappan, K.P. Kesava
Menon, E.M.S. Namboodiripad and A.K. Gopalan highlight their role in the Aikya Kerala Movement.

The study mainly hinges on primary sources collected from different archival repositories both inside and outside Kerala. Primary archival data drawn from various archives and libraries across the country are indeed vital. Secondary sources include books, journals, souvenirs, biographies, working papers, articles and unpublished M.Phil/Ph.D theses etc.

The records and other source materials preserved in the National Archives of India, Nehru Memorial Museum and library, Central Secretariat Library, P.C. Joshi Archives on Contemporary History, JNU, Ajoy Bhavan, New Delhi, Tamilnad Archives, The Hindu, Chennai; Kerala State Archives, Kerala University Library, Kerala Legislative Library, Centre for Development Studies, M.N. Smarakam, Thiruvananthapuram; Sahitya Academy, Appan Thampuram Museum, Trichur, University of Calicut, Regional Archives Kozhikkode, Paral Public Library, Kodiyeri, Thalassery, Revenue Reference Library Thalassery, Jawahar Library Kannur etc. have been consulted.

Data on opinions, perceptions and attitudes of the various political organizations and social groups were collected through interviews with the leaders and personalities, directly or indirectly associated with the movement including K. Madhavan (Kanhanganad), C. Kannan (Kannur) Moorkkoth Ramunni, (Thalassery) P. Bhaskaran (Thiruvananthapuram) K. Sadasivan Ex MLA (Maruthwamala near Nagarcoil) and K. Madhava Kurup (Mahe).

**Approach and Methodology**

The method adopted in the study is largely descriptive and interpretative. The linkage between the movements for linguistic reorganization and the national movement has been enquired into as a background of the linguistic Aikya Kerala Movement. In this respect it stands distinct from the rest.
The present thesis consists of six chapters treating of the central theme apart from an introduction and conclusion. The introduction itself being an outline of the research programme, makes clear the significance and objectives of the study. It also discusses the approach and methodology besides the logical connection of the chapters and their thematic relationship.

The opening chapter attempts to sketch the identity of Kerala as a linguistic-cultural region. The long historical processes involved in the formation of Kerala’s regional identity have been examined, incorporating the ideas discussed by the well known authorities on the related aspects. The role of Malayalam language as the strongest unifying bond for the cultural identity of the Malayalees has been explained in the chapter. Due attention has been given to discuss other distinctive features such as social institutions and forms of art and architecture. The Kerala Renaissance which effected a cultural integration of Kerala, also gets special focus in the first chapter.

The second chapter tracks the discussion on the linguistic nationality question emerged along with the national liberation movement. This chapter traces the genesis of the linguistic movement heralded with the antipartition struggle in Bengal. The struggle strengthened the linguistic nationalist ideology, resulting in the emergence of linguistic movements in other parts of India including Telugu speaking Andhra region in the erstwhile Madras presidency. The chapter also discusses in detail how the colonial government and the major political parties in India addressed the linguistic nationality question.

The colonial government responded negatively to the issue through the reports on constitutional reforms. The political parties especially the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India initiated serious discussions on the ideological perspectives and organizational strategies pertaining to the question. The Congress Annual Session at Nagpur in 1920 reorganized its provincial committees on linguistic basis. The (Motilal) Nehru Report of 1928 categorically endorsed the linguistic principle for
provincial reorganization. The Communist Party formulated its policy on the reorganisation of provinces by making a series of discussions on the basis of the Leninist theory of self determination of nationalities.

Sketching the origin of the United Kerala Movement, the third chapter examines the aspirations expressed at different quarters and the initial ventures made to see that Kerala was unified. The progress of the national movement in Kerala facilitated the interactions and involvements of peoples of different regions paving the way for the development of Kerala consciousness. The political conferences under the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee (KPCC) passed a series of resolutions underlining the need to form a separate Kerala province in the emerging constitutional set up. The formation and growth of the Socialist and Communist parties exerted profound influence on the nature of the political movement for freedom and democracy. The formulation of the dynamic slogan of linguistic United Kerala was a significant step taken by the Communist Party during the 1942-45 period. The chapter also unfolds the role of the class and mass organizations formed under the banner of the Congress Socialist Party and the Communist Party in widening the scope of political activity to the grass root level.

The fourth chapter is devoted to narrate the historical developments which facilitated and weakened the Aikya Kerala Movement, before and after independence. The discussion in this chapter unravels the class interests of the ruling authorities in the native states, provinces and centre. What the conservative leadership of the United Kerala Movement wanted was not a ‘linguistic’ state of Kerala, but the creation of a multilingual province on the west coast. They visualized an Aikya Kerala perpetuating ‘Parasurama’ tradition and memory of ‘Perumal’ rule. Thus by basing upon the mythological and legendary foundations, the ruling classes and the conservative organizers of the United Kerala Movement happened to unfold their reactionary character. The chapter also shows how the ‘Independent
Travancore’ proposal of Diwan Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar proved to be a grave hurdle for the Aikya Kerala Movement. It is also pertinent to note that in the post independence period, Congress began to retract from their earlier commitment on the formation of linguistic provinces. Both the Dar Commission Report and the JVP Committee Report recommended not to create linguistics provinces.

The fifth chapter analyses the developments related to the integration of Travancore and Cochin States and the compelling circumstances in which the central government set up the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) in the wake of the martyrdom courted by Potti Sriramulu. It also delves deep in to the discussions revealing the inner contradictions of the Congress organization in regard to the proposal of a Southern State (Dakshina Samsthan). The Malabar Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) which demanded the formation of a multilingual Southern State was moving in tune with the central Congress leadership which stood for ‘centralisation’. The chapter also sifts the views and perceptions of the major political parties on the question of states reorganization.

The sixth chapter focuses on the debates brought out in the legislatures and the print media on the recommendations of the SRC Report. These debates and discussions amply reveal the reactionary position of the Malabar Congress leadership quite in opposition to the Aikya Kerala Movement. The Travancore Tamilnad Congress (TTNC) reiterated its demand for the separation of Tamil taluks from Travancore Cochin. A section of the Congressmen of Travancore Cochin stood against the separation of Tamil taluks and they wanted to retain the undivided Keralam ('Akhanda Keralam'). Inspite of these contradictory positions taken by the mainstream national party, states reorganization proposals were primarily based on the consideration of language.

The conclusion sums up and synthesizes the findings of the study with some observations as postscript.